GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1262
ANSWERED ON:30.07.2001
REPORT OF WORLD COMMISSION ON DAMS
SUBODH MOHITE;UTTAMRAO NATHUJI DHIKALE

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received the report of world commission on dams;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have rejected the said report;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the Government are implementing any other scheme in this regard; and

(f) if so, the details thereof;

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SMT. BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY)

(a) to (f) Yes, Sir. The findings of the report of the World Commission on Dams (WCD) are given in Annex.These findings of the WCD are based on a limited knowledge base conveniently ignoring the all round development brought about by projects like Bhakra Dam, Nagarjunsagar Dam, Tungabhadra Dam etc.in the project areas. It has ignored the contribution made by such multipurpose projects in ushering in the 'green revolution' in the country and making India self sufficient in foodgrains and meeting fifteen percent of the total energy needs of the country through hydropower, which is the cheapest and most sustainable source.

Keeping in view the socio economic ethos of the country, Government of India has already framed and adopted a National Water Policy, which provide guidelines for the various facets of Water Resources Development. The guidelines for development suggested by World Commission on Dams in their final report are utopian in nature and are incompatible with our national development imperatives. To ensure continued self-sufficiency in foodgrain production and also to meet the energy and drinking water needs of our growing population, India proposes to continue with its programme of dam construction to create another 200 billion cubic metres of storage in the next 25 years. Both water resources development as well as efficient management of existing resources are equally important. Keeping this in view, major, medium and minor irrigation projects including sustainable groundwater exploitation alongwith rainwater harvesting using indigenous techniques are all integrated in the planning approach, besides the extra emphasis given to water management. In view of this, Ministry of Water Resources hasconveyed to the WCD that their recommendations and guidelines are not acceptable to Government of India.

ANNEX
Annex to answer to Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1262 Answered on 30.7.2001

FINDINGS OF THE REPORT OF THE WORLD COMMISSION ON DAMS

• Large dams display a high degree of variability in delivering predicted water and electricity services − and related social benefits − with a considerable portion falling short of physical and economic targets, while others continue generating benefits after 30 to 40 years.

• Large dams have demonstrated a marked tendency towards schedule delays and significant cost overruns.

• Large dams designed to deliver irrigation services have typically fallen short of physical targets, did not recover their costs and have been less profitable in economic terms than expected.

• Large hydropower dams tend to perform closer to, but still below, targets for power generation, generally meet their financial targets but demonstrate variable economic performance relative to targets, with a number of notable under and over performers.

• Large dams generally have a range of extensive impacts on rivers, watersheds and aquatic ecosystems − these impacts are more negative than positive and, in many cases, have led to irreversible loss of species and ecosystems.

• Efforts to date to counter the ecosystem impacts of large dams have met with limited success owing to the lack of attention to

anticipating and avoiding impacts, the poor quality and uncertainty of predictions, the difficulty of coping with all impacts, and the only partial implementation and success of mitigation measures.

• Pervasive and systematic failure to assess the range of potential negative impacts and implement adequate mitigation, resettlement and development programmes for the displaced, and the failure to account for the consequences of large dams for downstream livelihoods have led to the impoverishment and suffering of millions, giving rise to growing opposition to dams by affected communities worldwide.

• Since the environmental and social costs of large dams have been poorly accounted for in economic terms, the true profitability of these schemes remains elusive.